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HOUSE MEMORIAL 13

49TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2009

INTRODUCED BY

Mimi Stewart

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES DEPARTMENT TO
CONVENE A TASK FORCE TO DEVELOP A SUSTAINABLE PLAN FOR A
CONTINUUM OF GENDER-RESPONSIVE SERVICES AND PROGRAMS FOR GIRLS
IN THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM.

WHEREAS, girls in the juvenile justice system in the state
face many complex issues that differ from those facing boys in
the juvenile justice system; and

WHEREAS, the office of juvenile justice and delinquency in
the United States department of justice reports that girls now
comprise nearly thirty percent of all juvenile arrests in such
categories as assault, drug abuse and property crimes; and

WHEREAS, the intervention team of the Bernalillo county
girls probation unit reports that the number of girls in the
juvenile justice system in Bernalillo county reflects a

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1 national trend of increasing numbers of girls entering the
2 delinquency system; and

3 WHEREAS, gender-specific challenges and life circumstances
4 faced by girls in the juvenile justice system in New Mexico and
5 in the nation include a history of sexual, emotional and
6 physical abuse and associated mental health needs, promiscuous
7 behavior, running away, increased risk of pregnancy and
8 involvement with child protective agencies; and

9 WHEREAS, a disproportionate number of girls in the
10 juvenile justice system are girls in cultural minorities; and

11 WHEREAS, national studies verify that these challenges and
12 life circumstances create a strong likelihood that girls in the
13 juvenile justice system will become a future burden upon jails,
14 prisons and the child and adult welfare systems; and

15 WHEREAS, studies also confirm that girls differ from boys
16 in offense patterns; life and family circumstances; and
17 learning and communication styles, needs and strengths;
18 therefore, they require different services, treatment and
19 environments for their rehabilitation; and

20 WHEREAS, the national institute of corrections recognizes
21 that gender-responsive services and programs are necessary to
22 achieve the goal of appropriate intervention for girls in the
23 juvenile justice system; and

24 WHEREAS, the children, youth and families department
25 recognizes the need for gender-responsive treatment and

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1 believes that full implementation of a continuum of
2 gender-responsive services and programs will require
3 collaboration between the state, experts in the field and
4 stakeholders;

5 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
6 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the children,
7 youth and families department be requested to convene a task
8 force to develop a sustainable plan for a continuum of
9 gender-responsive services and programs for girls in the
10 juvenile justice system; and

11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force include
12 representatives from the staff of the children, youth and
13 families department, who have experience working directly with
14 girls in the juvenile justice system, juvenile probation
15 services and youth transitional services; the intervention team
16 of the Bernalillo county girls probation unit; staff of the
17 county juvenile detention system, who have experience working
18 directly with girls; the children's court of the public
19 defender department, including one representative recommended
20 by the New Mexico district attorney's association; the women's
21 justice project; a provider of gender-responsive services; and
22 two girls previously served by the juvenile justice system who
23 have successfully transitioned into positive adult lives; and

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force conduct a
25 review of current risk assessment tools, existing treatment

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1 options for gender-responsive services and programs and
2 best-practice models for implementing and sustaining
3 gender-responsive services and programs in the juvenile justice
4 system; and

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force develop a
6 comprehensive strategic plan for implementation of a continuum
7 of gender-specific services and programs for girls in the
8 juvenile justice system in the state; and

9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force present a
10 report of its findings and recommendations to the interim
11 legislative courts, corrections and justice committee by
12 November 2009; and

13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
14 transmitted to the secretary of children, youth and families
15 and to other organizations represented in the proposed task
16 force.